

Illinois Early Learning Council Meeting

June 22, 2015

11:00am-2:00pm

Roosevelt – 425 S Wabash St., Room 418, Chicago, IL

Attendance – Chicago: Jeff Aranawski, Lori Baas, Karen Berman, Stephanie Bernoteit (guest speaker), Barbara Bowman, Andrea Densham, Gaylord Gieseke, Dan Harris, Gloria Harris, Theresa Hawley, Reyna Hernandez, Brenda Jones (guest speaker), Teresa Kelly, Janet Maruna, Beth Mascetti-Miller, Janice Moenster, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Beth Purvis, Diana Rauner, Elliot Regenstein, Pam Reising Rechner, Linda Saterfield, Luz Maria Solis, Teri Talan, Kathy Villano Judith Walker-Kendrick, Maria Whelan, Melina Wright, Cass Wolfe, Josie Yanguas, Karen Yarbrough, Cindy Zumwalt

Attendance – Phone: Carol Morris, Donna Nylander, Sylvia Puente, Brynn Siebert, Joan Vitale

Minutes

I. Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)

Co-chair Beth Purvis welcomed all Early Learning Council members to the first meeting of 2015 and the first meeting under the new co-chairs. She thanked Roosevelt University for their hospitality and introduced herself as the Secretary of Education, working to ensure smooth transitions and reasonable choices for children and families. Introductions were provided in the room and for those on the phone.

Co-chair Phyllis Glink suggested a motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes. Gloria Harris moved that the minutes from the October meeting of the Early Learning Council be approved. A vote was taken, and the minutes passed unanimously with no corrections or discussion.

II. Update & Discussion on ISBE & DHS Budgets (30 minutes)

Purvis acknowledged uncertainty regarding the Fiscal Year 2015 budget, with its 2.5% cut across the state, and the larger crisis of the lack of a Fiscal Year 2016 budget and the current shortfall of 3 to 4 billion dollars in the general assembly's proposed budget. Purvis noted that many conversations need to be had about how to close the deficit while still taking care of the most vulnerable. She opened the floor to questions but noted that many answers were not yet available. Council discussed the lack of firm direction and the hope that clarity would come about soon.

Linda Saterfield explained the Child Care Assistance Program restrictions, which included freezing of intake, compliance with child support, parent copays, and service of priority populations only with a waiting list.

Maria Whelan noted the urgency of this moved that the Council give permission to the co-chairs to draft a letter to the Governor, the General Assembly, the majority/minority leaders of each party, and appropriate appropriations committees articulating the severe issues that

would take effect if cuts around the budget move forward, specifically around the Child Care Assistance Program. Theresa Hawley clarified that this motion would be specific to child care assistance and not other, more general programs such as Early Intervention or the budget in general. Council discussed the need to add in a bare minimum requirement and other desired needs, and a clear statement that investing in Preschool for All and Prevention Initiative doesn't make any sense without the Child Care investments. Elliot Regenstein suggested that the letter include a "both/and" focus on the fact that both the lack of a budget is causing devastating effects due to the lack of knowledge around what would happen next, and that there is a need to appropriately fund the investment because any cuts would cause catastrophic consequences.

Glink restated the motion. Cass Wolfe seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion to write this letter unanimously passed.

Glink invited the State Board of Education to share an update regarding their budget issues. Reyna Hernandez explained that representatives from McKinley Vento and from Title I were present. Cindy Zumwalt explained an across the board 2.25% cut to the Early Childhood Block Grant, which rolled out with a 7.14% administrative cut, a 2.25% infrastructure cut, and a cut of 2.18% to programs. She explained the rollout of \$97 million in hold harmless funds, of which over \$3 million were given back. She explained that ISBE had loaded in all Preschool For All and Prevention Initiative grants at level funding from Fiscal Year 2014, but that they can't be executed until there is a FY16 contract.

Gaylord Gieseke moved that the co-chairs send a second letter to the Governor, the minority/majority leaders and the General Assembly, and the appropriate related committees on appropriations, that the current status of the programs and services serving young children, which have critically integrated in their importance, are unable to move forward as of July 1st with their commitments to staffing, families, and provision of services because there are no contracts available, no authority to spend, and no understanding of when any services will be eligible for future funding or reimbursement, and that this is wreaking havoc at the community level with families and programs.

Judith Walker Kendrick seconded the motion with an amendment that the letter should include a note about community based organizations that need to borrow money, because the 15-20% interest rate will look like another cut. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

III. Maternal & Child Health Presentation – Brenda Jones (50 minutes)

Glink introduced Brenda Jones, Deputy Director of the Office of Women's Health at the Illinois Department of Public Health and Title V Director, who would give a presentation on Maternal and Child Health in Illinois. She provided a brief overview of Jones' biography and

expressed the council's continued desire to coordinate health of the child and mother into the work of early childhood development.

Brenda Jones explained her background as a team member at the NAEYC accreditation team inspecting child care policies, at which she learned quite a bit about early learning and development. She expressed her excitement to present.

Jones provided an overview of the context of the Office of Women's Health and described the Title V Flagship Program, which is a federal/state grant partnership which is dedicated to helping women and children. She explained the focus as teen pregnancy prevention, asthma screening, Chicago health, and other fields. She explained the results of a needs assessment, survey, and focus group which provided qualitative and quantitative results for the partnership. Of special note were a need to integrate care and coordination, to improve health literacy, to reduce fragmentation and duplication of services, to provide mental health and trauma-informed care, to provide sensitivity around social determinants, and to improve the infrastructure and systems of care. She explained that MCH hopes to focus much energy on high risk pregnancies, births by citizens occurring outside of the state, and mental health and depression support for mothers. She explained that the State developed ten priorities based on this research project, and that her office is currently engaged in the development of an action plan to put into motion what her team learned.

Jones described other projects, such as a reduction in infant mortality, work on a strategic plan for perinatal hospitals, a resource database, and breastfeeding collaborations.

Glink thanked Jones for her time and for her fascinating presentation.

IV. Higher Education Grants & IERC Report – Stephanie Bernoteit (20 minutes)

Purvis noted that teacher preparation is a critical component of early learning systems and explained the background of the partnerships with the Illinois Board of Higher Education to support teacher preparation programs, including their participation with Gateways Credential Entitlement and articulation efforts. She noted that as part of those efforts, the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge facilitates partnership grants between two and four year institutions of higher education, and that the Illinois Education Research Council was commissioned to complete an evaluation of that project. She invited Stephanie Bernoteit of the Illinois Board of Higher Education to present regarding this initiative and the study.

Bernoteit began by describing the Educator Preparation Partnership Initiative, which hoped to develop models of early childhood educator preparation through partnerships between two and four year institutions that incorporated Gateways to Opportunity, supported curriculum design, built capacity in key areas, and created opportunities for innovation and program implementation. She explained a requirement that programs must work on articulation and at least consider being part of Gateways to Opportunity. She provided an update on the two years' of grants: several to partner two and four year institutions in

2014-2015, as well as new partnership grants and a few continued implementation grants for 2015-2016.

Bernoteit then explained the IERC's evaluation, which hoped to examine the initial implication, identify barriers and catalysts, and determine sustainability of the project after the grant period. She explained the methodology of interviews, reviewed narratives, and themes and subtopics of interest through partnership development theory. She provided an overview of the results, including the motivations to participate (meeting students' needs, particularly through articulation, increased recruitment, degree completion, and general partnerships), barriers (including partner-specific institutional barriers and systemic barriers of the context in which they operate), catalysts (many adopted from McQuaid's, particularly noting that a focus on student achievement and a shared sense of all candidates entering being their students allowed a shift in focus that resulted in real progress), and potential long-term impacts (which were not yet well measured, but ideas such as pathways, systemic improvement, and the professionalization of the workforce). She provided an overview of the generally positive review, with some negatives noted.

Council discussed the idea of a non-licensed baccalaureate program and the potential to discuss student debt accumulation vs income potential moving forward.

V. Break (5 minutes)

VI. State Early Childhood Planning Process Update (15 minutes)

Purvis explained that the State recently received grant funds through a National Governor's Association Grant targeted toward creating a vision for the new administration's early childhood vision, as well as a continued Grand Victoria Foundation funding to staff the early learning council. Glink explained that this context, in light of continued conversations about what works and does not work well in the current structure of the council, would pave the way for a broader conversation about strategic planning of the council and of the state. Purvis explained that the last Executive Committee meeting involved the discussion of responding to these needs through the creation of a roadmap, provision of guidance on restructuring the Council to support the work laid out in that roadmap, the creation of recommendations on where and how state programs and funding streams should be organized, and the identification of processes to work with other state advisory bodies to move this work forward. Purvis turned it over to Theresa Hawley to provide a progress update.

Hawley provided an overview of the current plan for early childhood strategies, in particular the structure of the council and its committees. She noted that the Council would certainly be a part of that work moving forward, but that it would take time. She

explained that the Executive Committee would take the deeper dive to determine this roadmap, then would bring it to the full council within about nine months. She described the goals as equitable access, effectiveness, and sustainable practices.

Cesar Sanchez inquired regarding the importance of involving community members to truly determine and define equality – including the importance of hospitality to working parents and the involvement of community members in this restructuring and in the council generally. Hawley explained the current community systems work happening at the state level and the need to translate that to the communities themselves.

VII. Updates from Committees (25 minutes)

a. SIAC

i. Health Recommendations

Glink invited Karen Berman to present the SIAC's health recommendations. Berman described the executive summary, thanking Adam Becker and Janine Lewis for their work in the subcommittee and noting the approval at the Executive Committee in June. She explained that the recommendations focus on several areas of health concern and are presented in varying formats throughout the report. Berman moved that the recommendations be accepted as presented. Andrea Densham seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the recommendations passed with no changes or discussion.

b. HVTF

i. Health Recommendations

Purvis invited the Home Visiting Task Force's Health Connections Subcommittee to present their recommendations. Glendean Burton described the recommendations as the product of an advisory group of stakeholders with interest in home visiting and early childhood services in the State, identifying priority health issues and recommending resources, materials, and trainings to be created for home visitors. She noted a crosswalk occurring with those of SIAC. Burton moved that the council accept the recommendations as presented. Cass Wolfe seconded. The motion was taken to a vote which passed with no discussion or changes.

c. DRE

Elliot Regenstein noted that the committee had a meeting that coming afternoon, after which a better update would be ready.

d. PSQ

Janet Maruna noted the committee's work on a compensation report for educators and early childhood professionals. She also noted the work of the IOM report on

transforming the early childhood workforce, including a book club and webinars that would be given on the topic.

e. FCE

i. Goal statement change

Maria Whelan described a goal change in the committee that would more effectively define the work that the committee does to involve the community and its priority populations. Whelan moved that the goal change be approved. George Davis seconded. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously without comment or discussion.

VIII. Other Business (10 minutes)

IX. Adjourn (5 minutes)

The meeting stood adjourned at 2:00pm.